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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3967th meeting of the Security Council, held on 19 January 1999 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Letter dated 11 March 1998 from the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/223); Letter dated 27 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/272)", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council strongly condemns the massacre of Kosovo Albanians in the village of Racak in Southern Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, on 15 January 1999, as reported by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM). It notes with deep concern that the report of the KVM states that the victims were civilians, including women and at least one child. The Council also takes note of the statement by the Head of the KVM that the responsibility for the massacre lay with Federal Republic of Yugoslavia security forces, and that uniformed members of both the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia armed forces and Serbian special police had been involved. The Council emphasizes the need for an urgent and full investigation of the facts and urgently calls upon the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to work with the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and KVM to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.

"The Security Council deplores the decision by Belgrade to declare KVM Head of Mission Walker persona non grata and reaffirms its full support for Mr. Walker and the efforts of the OSCE to facilitate a peaceful settlement. It calls upon Belgrade to rescind this decision and to cooperate fully with Mr. Walker and the KVM.

"The Security Council deplores the decision by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to refuse access to the Prosecutor of the International Tribunal and calls upon the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to cooperate fully with the International Tribunal in carrying out an investigation in Kosovo, in line with the call for cooperation with the International Tribunal in its

resolutions 1160 (1998) of 31 March 1998, 1199 (1998) of 23 September 1998 and 1203 (1998) of 24 October 1998.

"The Security Council notes that, against clear KVM advice, Serb forces returned to Racak on 17 January 1999 and that fighting broke out.

"The Security Council considers that the events in Racak constitute the latest in a series of threats to the efforts to settle this conflict through negotiation and peaceful means.

"The Security Council condemns the shooting of personnel of the KVM on 15 January 1999 and all actions endangering KVM and international personnel. It reaffirms its full commitment to the safety and security of the KVM personnel. It reiterates its demands that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo Albanians cooperate fully with the KVM.

"The Security Council calls upon the parties to cease immediately all acts of violence and to engage in talks on a lasting settlement.

"The Security Council also strongly warns the 'Kosovo Liberation Army' against actions which are contributing to tensions.

"The Security Council considers all of these events to be violations of its resolutions and of relevant agreements and commitments calling for restraint. It calls upon all parties to respect fully their commitments under the relevant resolutions and affirms once again its full support for international efforts to facilitate a peaceful settlement on the basis of equality for all citizens and ethnic communities in Kosovo. The Council reaffirms its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

"The Security Council takes note with concern of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that five and a half thousand civilians fled the Racak area following the massacre, showing how rapidly a humanitarian crisis could again develop if steps are not taken by the parties to reduce tensions.

"The Security Council will remain actively seized of the matter."